



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Health Care Quality and Cost Council
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Chair

KATHARINE LONDON
Executive Director

Transparency and Communication Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday April 2, 2008

3:15 – 5:00 p.m.

One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor
Boston, MA

Council Members Present: Quentin Palfrey, Kevin Beagan, JudyAnn Bigby, Beth Capstick, Shannon Linde, Katharine London, Bob Seifert, and Kathy Glynn representing Dolores Mitchell

JudyAnn Bigby announced that Bob Seifert will be leaving the Council. Bob recently began a new job and will no longer represent the Massachusetts Medicaid Policy Institute on the Council. JudyAnn Bigby announced that Anya Wallack will replace Bob on the Council. The Council thanks Bob Seifert for his work with the Council and its committees.

Meeting called to order at 3:12pm

I. Approval of Minutes of Committee Meeting March 5, 2008

The Committee approved the Minutes of its March 5, 2008 meeting.

II. Update on the Web Application Development

Gilles Charest, Project Manager for the Council gave an update on the Web Application Development. Gilles Charest reviewed the Council's timeline, work plan, progress and next steps moving forward. Gilles Charest has been working directly with the players involved in the website development and although there are a lot of moving parts, he announced that all involved parties are cooperating and making great progress. So far, the Web Application Development process is running on schedule and is expected to make the deadline date.

Katharine London explained the technicality of the project. She assured the Committee that all of the moving pieces are in place and making progress according to the Council's plan. Gilles Charest has developed a timeline and a detailed checklist that includes the process in sequential order and will have that available for those who are interested.

III. Review of Cost and Quality Measures for Display on the Council's Website

In the last Committee meeting Charlie Baker and Delores Mitchell were designated to come up with a list of the top 30 inpatient and outpatient procedures in terms of total spending, for consideration as cost measures that could be used on the Council website. Katharine London shared the list of cost measures with John Freedman, the Council's Clinical Consultant, for

review and asked that he lends his input and expertise in helping the Committee identify the best cost measures currently available.

John Freedman reviewed the original list compiled by the GIC, as well as the top DRGs from the DHCFP hospital discharge data set. He gave a brief presentation on why he recommended against including some measures from the GIC list and why he recommended adding some additional measures.

Dr. Freedman recommended reporting cost data for procedures that are well-defined, common, and well understood by consumers. He recommended against reporting cost information for procedures that are rare or where patients receiving the services have very different conditions (e.g. neonatal intensive care). He also recommended against reporting individual components of costs, such as cost per operating room hour.

IV. Web Application Communication Plan, Solomon McCown

Lauren Louison from SolomonMcCown Associates presented the Web Application Communication Plan. The presentation proposed a plan that would:

- Provide consumers with the knowledge that they have choices when making critical health care decisions.
- Increase awareness and educate consumers and providers to seek quality and cost information, and use it in their decision-making process.
- Establish the MyHealthCareOptions website as the premier site for accurate and trusted quality and cost information.
- Strengthen relationships within the provider, insurer and legislative communities to ensure that they are conduits for quality and cost information across the Commonwealth.

The Communication Plan highlighted key audiences including Consumers, Providers, Payers & Employers and Policymakers. It also recommended strategies for reaching each of these groups. The Communication Plan included Web Reach and Teach Programs to be provided to key audiences in May-June of 2008.

V. Review of Draft Data Release Policy

In fall of 2007 the Council began developing a Data Release Policy to protect the use of the claims data it is collecting from health insurance carriers. The Data Release regulation is aimed at making sure that the data is properly used to serve its purpose as defined by the Council.

Katharine London reviewed the Draft Data Release Regulation with the Committee. She reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Oversight Committee and the Review Board, two entities responsible for overseeing the Data Release Process.

JudyAnn Bigby suggested that there be one body responsible for overseeing how the data will be used and another body to make sure the application is complete and to decide whether the request should or should not go to the Review Board. The Review Board should be the last step in the process and should have the final say on whether the request should be granted to the individual(s) seeking to obtain the data.

Katharine London asked that members of the Committee review the draft regulation for presentation to the full Council at its next meeting. The Council would then vote on whether to propose the draft regulations for public comment. Katharine said that researchers and other interested parties are expressing excitement about the availability of the dataset.

The Committee discussed the penalty process for individual(s) who do not comply with the Data Release Regulations and suggested that the Council seek more information on how it can exercise legal recourse if need be.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00pm